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Flashlights on spiritual law

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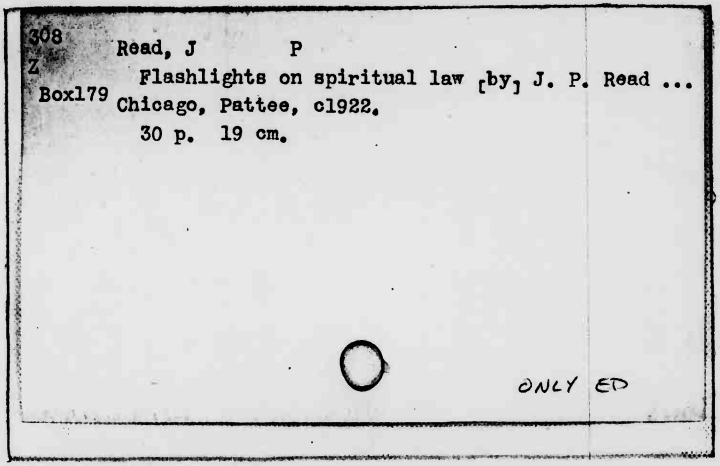

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FLASHLIGHTS

ON

SPIRITUAL LAW

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FLASHLIGHTS
ON
SPIRITUAL LAW

J. P. READ
New York, July 4, 1922

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Affectionately dedicated to the Men and Women

of the Twentieth Century

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INTRODUCTION

The subject matter, contained in these chapters, is the result of a series of impressions and observations gleaned from a life of study and travel, therefore, is not intended to be a dogmatic statement of truth, but rather, suggestions presented for your thoughtful consideration.

As the camera registers picture after picture, so I shall endeavor to catch on my plate and develop for you, views of certain unseen forces in the Universe, demonstrating their influence and moulding power upon the life, character and environment of the men and women who people this earth—your neighbors and mine.

Flashlights on Spiritual Law.

CHAPTER I

Reader, did you ever stop to think there is a language of the spirit, as clearly defined and as definite as French, German, Italian or Latin? Did you ever try to learn the spiritual meaning of the words you so freely use in everyday speech? What is the correlation between physical facts and spiritual realities? The common ordinary experiences and customs, the little nothings that make up a day's program, work and play, what is their significance in this language? The home, the neighbors, your friends, your pleasures, your gifts, your attractive power, what is their cue and their place in your life drama?

Think with me for a while as we go over these trivial observances of an everyday life.

Ah, trivial—yes, yet the foundation of the show-ups being prepared for you in your state after death.

We will translate some word, so let us imagine this is a class room in the Berlitz or Sauveur School of Languages and commence by discussing hands.

They typify service. Think of the many plays and dramas you have attended, see the lover, how he treasures the glove of his lady-love, it is her devoted service he is seeking. The Germans, in the late war, wished to destroy the power of usefulness of the conquered people and they cut off the hands of little children.

Proceed to the finger nails. Students translate it.

Now, journey with me backwards into the history of the past, examine the customs of some of the ancient races; there, we shall find the educated classes wrote with the finger nail. A nicely shaped hand with well tapered fingers is a symbol of refinement.

Why do some children bite the nails. I suspect it is a sign of a disorderly home where the spiritual life is on the decline.

Everybody is interested in the hair, especially in these days when the flapper and her bobbed head is much in evidence. The braid down the back indicates youth and purity, while the hair dressed high in some barbaric tribes denotes the marriage state and the shaven crown of the priest is the sign of spiritual renunciation, the sacrifice of worldly desires for spiritual attainment.

Could it be that the bobbed head of the flapper is a forecast of her future, registering the loss of worldly possessions, not for higher service, but because of a lack of grace. The strength of Samson lay in his hair.

Let us consider the breath, it is the life sustaining force. Turning to Genesis, Chapter II, you will find, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." So correlated is the breath with the soul.

If we contemplate the word water one stands silent, in awe, for this ordinary everyday fluid that every faucet and drinking fountain in the city offers you freely, is so essential to life nothing would thrive without it, both men and animals would die, cut off from this refreshment.

In literature recall the rivers famous as cleansing and purifying agents. In the Christian religion might not the disciples have been chosen because they were fishermen, dwelling by the sea, partaking of its purity and possessing minds and bodies fit to receive instruction?

It is by baptism, by the Sacramental use of water, man is regenerated.

Do you remember in the New Testament, as related by St. John, in the beginning of miracles water was turned into wine? Might it not typify the cleansing of the water is given spiritually to the world, through the Sacrifice of Christ, symbolized in the red of the wine?

In the homes of the poor, the bath tub is often lacking, and this is not primarily, a question of money as you might promptly answer; no, the root of this evil lies deeper—cleanliness is next to Godliness has a more important significance than appears on the surface.

In countries where squalor abounds the environment indicates a low ebb of consciousness, change the spiritual and the physical will respond; but labor only with the physical you are placing the cart before the horse, although you

will effect a change because of the existing correlation.

Everyone is concerned to promote sound health, and this age is one hundred percent interested, which is right minded, for it is essential to have a strong intellect and healthy body if one is to enter into the twentieth century rush, hurry and competition. The daily papers advertise many remedies, electrical treatment, violet rays, mental science, and so on up and down the gamut. A simple secret of healing I am going to mention: seek that which brings you nearer to the symbolic power of the Spirit. Physicians show good judgment advising visits to mineral springs, sea trips and fishing excursions, they are sure to make a hit with their patients, subconsciously the mind of the invalid is stimulated and the body responds. That is why Kneipp effected his cures, water was his prescription.

Consider the dread disease consumption—is not fresh air the principal recommendation of specialists, and breath correlates with Spirit.

Heavy smoking soils the breath, denoting a retrogression from the finer sensibilities.

Now, I am intending to speak to you on the

subject of food, which is a universal topic. For years this country has been flooded with pamphlets describing various diets, and there have sprung up any number of theories, fads have flourished in all sections of America, the vegetarian, nut and banana advocates, the milk cure, Fletcherites, pop corn enthusiasts, all have had their propaganda. Does man realize the depth of the subject and its vital and direct bearing on his health and happiness? In many Eastern countries, vegetables are partaken of as a purifying agent, while the Jewish people were taught there were clean and unclean animals, symbolic instruction, that there were clean and unclean spiritual conditions. But the Christians are given no such regulations, they are restored through the Sacraments of the Church, which perpetuate the Sacrifice of Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

Have you ever read why the ancient Egyptians embalmed their dead and kept the bodies for thousands of years? Historians tell us it was because they wished to bind the sins committed, to that body, and thus have a fresh start in the new birth accorded them by their doctrine.

A warning to this age is to remember that oriental sauces are part of a well thought out

system of religious development and the unwary will fall under these stimulants which excite the passions and emotions, tending to aid sin. These condiments act directly upon the physical desire nature, thereby lessening moral control. The drug habit of the Eastern races, spreading so rapidly in America, has its root in oriental understanding, and may it not be a part of an organized religious, as well as mercantile propaganda?

Scientists are stating that there is much malnutrition among the children of the wealthy. Doesn't it seem strange, in a house of plenty, the best loved objects, the children should be underfed, yet, this is an observation of the scientist. I would bring to your consideration a query, is not food more closely connected with the mental attitude than at first glance seems possible. In a home where the parents, consciously or unconsciously, wish to deprive their child of spiritual growth, candy is generally taboo, bad for the teeth, or increases the weight, or some other excuse is made for denial. Meat, also, is doled out in small quantities, possibly the family physician will diagnose rheumatism in the system and recommend more vegetables and less meat. Study and see how religious tendencies

bring a taste and desire for certain dishes; a wholesome spiritual attitude will create the liking for strengthening, nourishing food on the family table in place of morbid cravings for an indigestible diet which generates poison in the system. Constipation is acknowledged by leading practitioners to be the cause of many ailments and incorrect eating is largely responsible for this. Poison in the system is one of the sign posts of natural religion.

CHAPTER II

Suppose we call on some of your friends or mine, living in an up-to-date apartment house, very likely we shall find a pretty, cozy home, but small and compact, with but little space for growing children, and the in-a-door bed, the davenport and often untidy living room—is it really desirable? The modern flat is an expression of existing convictions.

Think of the old-fashioned parlor of your grandmother, shut away from everyday living, devoted to the higher enjoyments, opened for family reunions, the Yule season and Thanksgiving festivities. What a picture of hospitality Longfellow and other writers of the last century depict for us. Isn't it enough to cause envy? Where now is the store-room in the cellar filled with provisions? Does the corner delicatessen shop take its place? A parlor is the direct expression of the owner, for here is the center of the culture, refinement and social life of that family.

Let us board a steamer and cross the ocean, making a tour through the ancient palaces of the kings of France. Read the history hidden in the silence of those stately halls, yet, visible to the spiritual eye. Visit the countryside, farms, chateaux and monasteries and let them talk to you through the language of symbols.

From Paris, motor to Versailles, the pleasure palace of the kings, lying at the termination of a magnificent roadway — memories of the radiant Marie Antoinette come before you, why did she make believe at being a shepherdess or dairy maid and with the ladies of her court milk the cows? Turn to the pages of history and you will find commentaries a plenty. One historian writes — it was because she admired the country life and was bored by the exactions of court etiquette that she arranged for herself and her ladies in waiting this miniature farm. But there is a deeper thought; may I be frank and suggest it? A farm typifies the outward manifestation of invisible conditions. The family of Marie Antoinette had fallen under the viewpoint which produced this effect. Her freak desire lay deeper than caprice, it was prompted by the silent workings of the root evil or disease which

eventually undermined her estate, and lost her a kingdom.

Read the symbolism in your own home. Do you live in a stone, brick or frame house? Is it mortgaged? Is it free from incumbrance? Hereafter, your life story will be woven for you from just such familiar detail, it is the woof that weaves the web of fate.

You, gardeners, are you aware what you are raising? They are show-ups for the future. Do the grasshoppers devour your crops, or the cows trample down your corn or the pigs walk up to your door as if to call on you? Listen to what they tell you—wiser to listen here than wait for the hereafter.

In the New Testament, Mary at the tomb, supposed Jesus to be the gardener. He is the Gardener who nurtures souls.

CHAPTER III

Suppose now we turn to the disposition. Mothers, especially, must give this much concern and consideration. Sally, unfortunately, has a bad temper, or Johnnie is slothful—refuses to study his lessons and won't rise mornings in time for school; baby cries all day long. What produces this? I would like to offer a few remarks. Sloth is the outcome of unseen causes, vibrations that attack the body and mind of the children in the home. Nervousness is largely due to these intangible vibrations, the poor victim can't sit still, can't sew, can't study, can't concentrate. Just as radio, on a sound wave carries tone half around the world, so the body of man comes under currents that tend towards health and strength or weakness and prostration.

Sloth is a terrible subject to contemplate, in it lies one of the sources of the mental differences between the bright boy and the dullard, it is rooted in the spiritual laws of natural religion. Some Christian men and women fall under this influence more than others, and the result is a negative life. You will then realize people make themselves less often than we think, many obtain more credit than is due them, others receive condemnation not their portion. Have you remarked the exaggerated praise accorded to one man in a community, while many were a part of his success, and, often, another is forced to take the blame, he does not merit; but this is a phenomenon of natural religion. Even in a home, as small a circle as this, one child, often the second born, will be selected by this peculiar invisible domination to show up the right. Everything falls into the cap of that child. The mother praises, the father admires him, the neighbors express their esteem, and the child, no better than the others, possibly worse, is himself a tool of this mysterious intelligence. The accepted understanding of greatness is fallible.

Observe many a home, mark the discords, the quarrels at table, the unreasonable jealousy, that makes a captive of the loved one. Is jealousy solely the motif? No. Discordant vibrations nag like a swarm of mosquitoes, irritate the nerves, excite the passions, and a question may

be raised, whether free will is not attacked and endangered.

The beginning of a caste system is not generally recognized in the United States, yet it is subconsciously at work, the doctor feels superior to the merchant, the salesman to the clerk and so on and so on until social life becomes paralyzed. It is time a remedy is applied—let in the sunlight. Man, left to himself, follows the dark, underground, lying, deceiving, treacherous pathway.

Here I am going to call your attention to an observation that may anger and surprise you, bringing forth a vehement the author is crazy, but I beg your leniency just to listen. Mothers, when your children, whom you so dearly love, are taken from you by death, don't turn and blame God, but remember Moloch, and how the early mothers threw their little ones into the flames, or before the wheels of the juggernaut. Ignorant, superstitious and unenlightened you called them, when you were a student at college. Yes, but it is a symbol of the sacrifices that are taken from you by the compelling power of natural religion. Study the Japs, and their sense of sacrifice; study before you condemn this statement.

Our college professors like to write long pamphlets on folk-lore, and the peasant has a million superstitions, about her scissors, her tea leaves, etc.; but I infer these legends have their foundation in the symbolism of the spiritual language.

Children, I am going to address myself to you, who love the out-of-door life, and are probably members of camping clubs and the scout movement, watch the squirrels, they tell you of Eternity, see how they store the nuts, as you should store good deeds; and the little rabbit, that peeps out from the thicket, will teach you about the Resurrection, it is the Easter bunny that brings the Easter egg; and the horse will warn you if you are not a little gentleman, or a little lady, if you do not bridle your tongue and curb your temper he will throw you. Horsemanship is intimately connected with one's spiritual position.

Possibly symbolism is a medium of communication between humans and the spirit world; this may be a reason investigators find it difficult to understand the intercourse not knowing the language. Take for example the words "teeth" and "corsets," so often expressed in mediumistic circles. These terms stand for ideas.

CHAPTER IV

Has it ever occurred to you that the many variations discernible in Christian denominations may have their origin in lapses and inclinations toward the past heritage of the race? For when all is said, the majority of Christians are only Gentiles grafted upon the Tree of Grace.

Modernism, in many of the theories, tends toward much that is familiar to the student of ancient history; and the moral laxities and affinities so frequent in modern society could be profitably examined by turning a search light on the past. Isn't it a strange bent of the human mind that the authors of today strive to attain the realizations of the unbaptized when the heritage is theirs without the seeking? It is like carrying coals to Newcastle.

Shakespeare in his plays darts many a humorous thrust at the revival of ancient philosophical schools as prevalent in his day as ours, while his dramas show unmistakable evidence he was conversant with the metaphysics of his generation.

The Greek dramatists, in the flowering period, the Age of Pericles, are practically unintelligible to us without journeying into the very heart of the intricate system of paganism. Of course, the rhetoric, the composition, the dramatic effects may be appreciated, but the unfolding of the plot turns on the metaphysics of that period.

A warning to this century, the sin of presumption is heavily punished in these ancient religions and sooner or later the blow will strike the modern enthusiast.

May I comment, with no intention of appearing bold or giving offence, merely, to open a channel of study and discussion, why do some denominations prefer the individual Cup in the service commemorating the Sacrifice of Christ? Might it not be that the individual Cup suggests salvation, partly or wholly through individualism, the one Cup typifying dependence on Christ. This is possibly due to the confusing of two decided and distinct schools of spiritual development and unfoldment. Hygienic reasons play a minor part, the major truth lies deeper.

In this materialistic age one hesitates even to whisper the word obsession, yet the exhibitions

of hypnotic control so puzzling to scientists are not to be compared to the silent, unseen, unrecognizable hypnotism in the world today, which is so prevalent it startles the investigator. A trained eye can discern the symptoms in the boys and girls, your Dick or Harry, Mary or Helen, and even in animals, the family cat and dog. The line of least resistance is used in these manifestations and this gives an appearance of naturalness that eludes the casual observer. Study your own mind and your own life, you will be surprised at the wonderful discoveries you can make. Remark the little dramas prepared around you by the invisible world. Is it purely happen chance, the friends who drop in to see you Sunday morning just at church hour, or that unexpected dinner invitation? A sudden impulse is often the outward sign of unseen obsession.

In some of the secret cults where silent suggestion is used, so dominating is the impulse given that to oppose it is to receive a fall or a complete turning of the body.

Attraction and repulsion seem to be a basic principle of natural religion, while the ancient philosophers sought to arrive at equilibrium or the center. This attraction and repulsion en-

tails a restriction whereby it becomes difficult for the common people to act, except when instigated by self-interest or sex motive; and, here, I would urge the deep and wonderful significance of performing an act I. H. N., from the author's observation, it seems to be the surest way for the average, ordinary man and woman to render unselfish service; it raises him above attraction and repulsion into Spirit.

CHAPTER V

S-r-r-r-r

Here enters the snake. All lovers of literature from the earliest pages of history and art are brought into recognition of the symbol of the serpent. In the stories of Greek mythology when a wise man passed by, the reptile was seen winding its way into the grasses.

Wise—serpent—they were linked together just as a hunter is followed by his dog, the lightning by thunder.

The serpent is an illustration of great antiquity, it refers to wisdom and wisdom is the understanding of the mysteries of the universe.

The Serpent of Athene, she who in the legend sprang from the mind of Zeus, and the Serpent of Moses, he, who became the chosen leader of the Jewish race; in this one comparison is comprised the understanding of the Greeks and the understanding of the Jewish

nation. But do not confound the two, for there is no circumcision for the lower classes in the wisdom of Minerva; Moses lifted up the serpent for the children of Israel and led them out of bondage, while St. Patrick chased the snakes from Ireland, which is a legend he who runs may read.

The Hebrews circumcise and the Christians receive the greater circumcision of the spirit which includes the lesser — the Sacrifice of Christ.

He who washed the feet of His disciples, cleanses and purifies all who walk His Way.

CHAPTER VI

Americans are dissipated readers, they choose their books as carelessly and as thoughtlessly as they buy a ribbon or a soda, yet, there are volumes which bring into the home destructive influences, ruining the peace and happiness of family life. No, it is not confined to literature containing evil suggestions, the most polished writings, models of style, expression and refinement may be productive of evil results.

Manual training is preferable to the perusal of Latin or Greek authors.

Let us introduce the Bible into our public schools more and more, then, young America will be renovated.

CHAPTER VII

The clergy of today recognize the unworthiness of man, which like the panther in Dante's masterpiece, stands blocking his way from the House of God; do they realize in its fullness the worthiness of Christ that opens the door to the sinner. The grace of Christ is so tremendous sinners and publicans became His friends. He who said to St. Peter three times, "Feed my sheep," must be sorrowful at the prevailing attitude of this generation.

We forget that the Christian of Christian heritage sliding back into natural religion, faces consequences far more terrible than the man born under its laws. The Christian is apt to revert to his former status, and the cataclysm so prevalent in modern society, the sudden reverses, the broken homes, the lack of stability and trustworthiness is an indication of this retrogression.

If America is not to be sold into bondage, if

we would draw nearer to the peace of the Garden of Eden, Christianity must be the dominant note, we must spread the glad tidings, lead the people into the House of God with sincerity, help them to realize the awful consequences of a life apart from the church, then, happiness and prosperity will flourish; the land of the free and the home of the brave will be safe for democracy.

THE END

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